

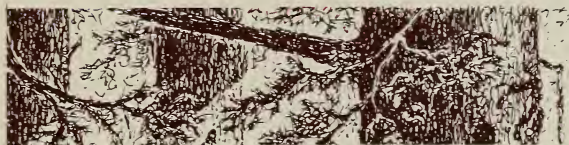
## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



2 SD 11  
R23

C 2



# Alaska Wilderness

Tongass National Forest



*In wildness is the  
preservation of the world*

—Henry David Thoreau



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

PREPARED BY  
Forest  
Service

Alaska Region  
Leaflet  
R10-MB-188



In 1964, Congress passed the Wilderness Act designating wilderness areas for the preservation and protection of lands in their natural condition. Wilderness is a wellspring of values--some are known; others await discovery.

### **Air Quality**

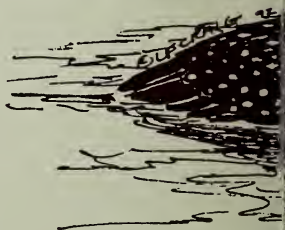
Wilderness helps improve the quality of air we breath by the filtering action of the vegetation.

### **Ecological**

*Wilderness areas are the only yardsticks we have. . .of the long-continued interactions of natural ecological laws in the absence of people.*

—Stanley A. Cain

Wilderness protects biological diversity essential to ecosystem stability and survival of many plant and wildlife species.



# Wilderness Values Are Many

*... It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.*

*—1964 Wilderness Act*

## Education

Earth's wild places are living classrooms that can teach us about nature, the importance of interconnectedness and our relationship in the natural community.

## Recreation

*Wilderness is a necessity. . . a fountain of life. . .*

*thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountain is going home, that wildness is a necessity.*

*—John Muir*



It is the love of nature, of wild places and all they offer that draws us to them. It is a special experience—a primitive adventure with a chance for challenge.



## Spiritual

Wilderness is the lone call of the loon, the lingering mist draped along the mountainside, the silence of an old-growth forest. We seek wild places for solitude and quiet—a reprieve from the pressures of daily life.

## Science and Research

As more and more ecosystems are altered by our actions, wilderness becomes essential laboratories of natural systems.

## Watershed Protection

*Of all our natural resources, water has become the most precious.*

*—Rachel Carson*

All life forms depend on clean water sources for survival. Vast areas of undisturbed land are necessary to filter and produce clean water. Wilderness protects valuable watersheds.



## Wildlife

*What are we  
without the beasts?  
If all the beasts  
were gone, we would die  
from a great loneliness of spirit.*

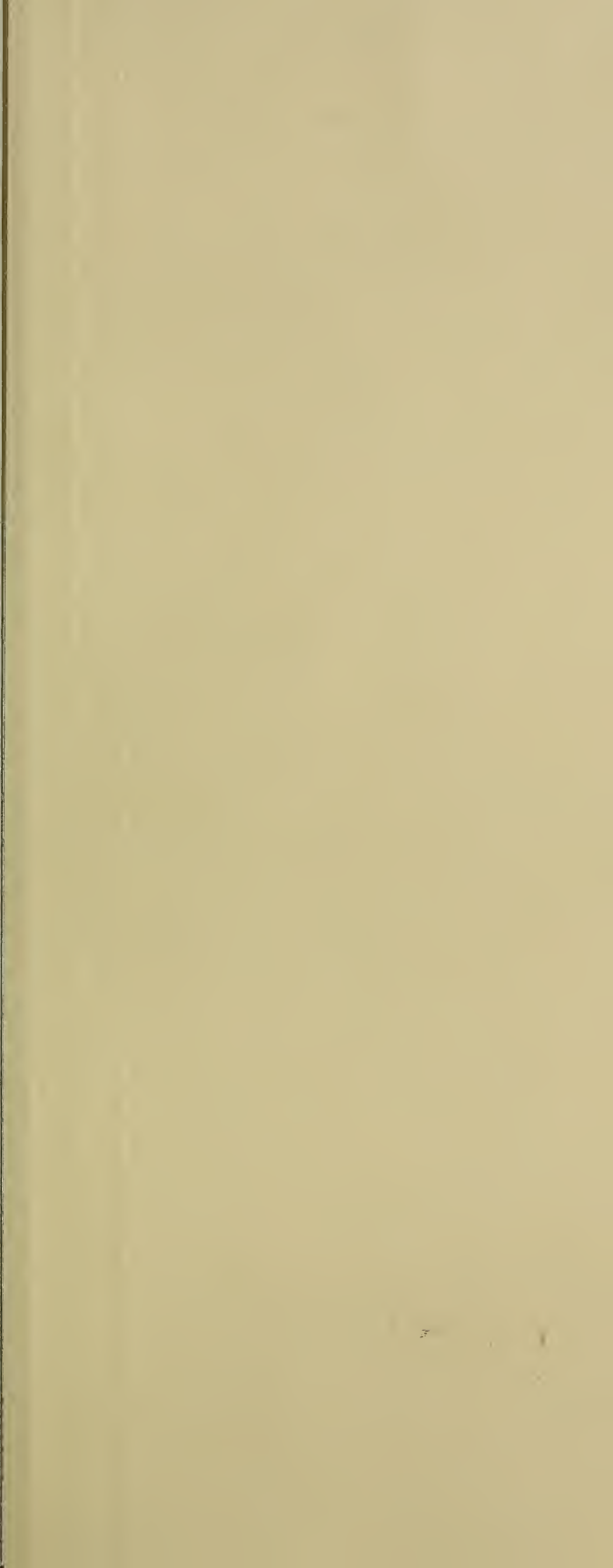
—Chief Seattle



Wildlife and wilderness belong together. The diversity within many wilderness areas provides the stability that can maintain healthy wildlife populations. Wilderness becomes a refuge for some endangered species that depend on large tracts of wild lands.



As we enjoy the gifts of wilderness, we must realize that everyone's impact, no matter how small, makes a change. Learning to enjoy wilderness in a manner that reduces our impacts can make a significant contribution to preserving wilderness character.



# Wilderness

## Tongass National Forest

Wilderness areas in the Tongass National Forest, Southeast Alaska, are unusually diverse natural ecosystems. They encompass vast expanses of remote land that is rich in the quiet beauty of old-growth forest, miles of misty coastline, bountiful freshwater streams and lakes, fertile estuaries and saltwater marshes—varied habitats supporting a varied world of wildlife.

Designated wilderness in Alaska is managed with direction from the 1964 Wilderness Act and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). ANILCA recognized the different needs and lifestyle of Alaskans and included special provisions to allow for certain uses prohibited in wilderness outside Alaska. These uses include public cabins; some types of motorized vehicles such as snowmachines, motorboats and airplanes when used for traditional activities; temporary fishing and hunting camps; and subsistence activities.





Recreation opportunities include hiking, backpacking, fishing, hunting, boating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, photographing, beach combing, wildlife viewing, and public use cabins.

Each wilderness is special, yet each exhibits a rugged landscape revealing thousands of years of glaciation, volcanic activity, and moving water—a landscape of mountains and fiords, mainland and islands. An intricate network of waterways provides a unique way to visit wilderness. Wilderness in the Tongass is magnificent in all its wonders!



# Leave No Trace

The goal of Leave No Trace is for people in wild country to travel in such a way that others will not be able to tell that anyone passed that way before.

- ❖ Stay on trails. Cutting switchbacks speeds erosion.
- ❖ When hiking cross-country, avoid muskegs and meadows as they are fragile and impacts last longer. If you must walk across muskegs, spread out.
- ❖ Choose campsites 200 feet or more from lakes, streams, meadows, and trails.
- ❖ Cook on a small stove and avoid building campfires.
- ❖ If you do build a fire, keep it small, hide its traces. Use a fire pan and build fires below mean high tide where evidence will be erased. In heavy-use areas, use existing campfire rings.
- ❖ Use the "cat hole method" to dispose of human waste by making a shallow hole and covering it up.
- ❖ Wash dishes away from water sources.
- ❖ Leave no trash, buried or otherwise.

USDA policy prohibits discrimination because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or handicapping condition. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any USDA-related activity should immediately contact the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.

